

Charter-school ruling prompts initiative targeting Supreme Court

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Ellensburg lawmaker said he'll file an initiative that would require state Supreme Court justices to recuse themselves if they've received large campaign contributions from those involved in cases before the court.

The Associated Press

OLYMPIA (AP) — A Republican lawmaker said Monday he'll file an initiative to the Legislature this week that would require state Supreme Court justices to recuse themselves if they've received large campaign contributions from those involved in cases before the court.

Rep. Matt Manweller, of Ellensburg, said he'll file the measure with the secretary of state's office Tuesday. Under the proposed measure, a justice would be required to step down from hearing a case if his or her campaign received a donation of \$1,000 or more within the past six years from any person or entity that is part of the case.

The move is sparked by a recent decision of the high court to strike down the state's charter school law. Several justices received campaign donations from the teachers union, which was part of the lawsuit against the law.

Chief Justice Barbara Madsen wouldn't comment directly to the proposal but wrote in an email Monday, "We have an elected judiciary whose job is to decide constitutional questions fairly and impartially."

Manweller must collect at least 246,372 valid signatures of registered state voters by Dec. 31 in order to be certified.

If there are enough valid signatures submitted, it goes to the Legislature, where lawmakers have three options: They could vote on the measure, and the measures

would appear on the November ballot if they don't pass; they could take no action, meaning the initiatives would go straight to the ballot; or they could recommend an alternate measure to run alongside the initiatives on the ballot.

The next legislative session begins Jan. 11.